

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS HELP EXPAND E-FILE OPTIONS

WASHINGTON -- The Internal Revenue Service has announced new partnerships with private sector companies to increase the opportunities for taxpayers to use electronic filing services this year. These partnerships broaden the electronic services accessible through the IRS Web site this year.

"We are pleased that the private sector continues to work with us to offer the American public the benefits of e-filing," said Bob Barr, IRS Assistant Commissioner for Electronic Tax Administration. "This is a winning situation for taxpayers who want a convenient and affordable path to a more accurate tax return and a quicker refund."

As part of these non-monetary agreements, the IRS has placed hyper-links from the "IRS e-file Partnerships" page of its Web site -- www.irs.ustreas.gov -- to the partners' Web sites. The companies, in turn, have developed initiatives to increase e-filing among balance due filers, those with complex tax returns, and those filing both federal and state returns. Some are even offering free e-filing for certain taxpayers.

The IRS e-file Partnerships page currently has links to these companies providing services for individuals:

- Universal Tax Systems, Inc.: prepare and e-file all federal and state returns; free for active U.S. military and Oklahoma residents -- charge for others.
- Intuit, Inc.: prepare and e-file federal and state returns; free services for some.
- UDS ELECTroTAX LLC: download free software for federal and Maryland returns; charge for e-filing.
- 2nd Story Software, Inc.: free software; charge for deluxe package or e-filing.
- Block Financial Corp.: free 1040EZ e-filing online; charge for federal and state software includes one e-filed return.
- H&R Block, Inc.: link to e-filing and other tax services.
- Jackson Hewitt: tax information; download discount tax preparation coupon.

(more)

Some e-file partners provide services to businesses to promote e-file to their customers or employees. The IRS Web site currently has links to three such partners:

- Electronic Filing TODAY - Peoples Income Tax: newsletter for tax professionals; e-filing for individuals; other tax and financial services.
- QuickFile USA: free e-filing materials for credit unions and employer groups.
- Tax Refund Express: e-file products and services for financial institutions.

The IRS and the U.S. Government neither endorse nor guarantee these companies or their products or services.

The IRS began this partnership approach last year and in November invited companies to submit proposals for the 1999 season.

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